

Reading [Jer 31:7-9](#); Psalm [Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6](#); Reading: [Heb 5:1-6](#); Alleluia [2 Tm 1:10](#); Gospel [Mk 10:46-52](#)

## Master, I want to see

For the last two Sundays, the Church has proposed to us readings in which Saint Mark shows us examples of incomplete or inappropriate discipleship.

Two Sundays ago, the gospel was about this man that despite fulfilling God's commandments since his youth, he doesn't follow Jesus' invitation due to his attachment to his wealth. Last Sunday, it was about the two close and loved disciples who were still spiritually blind. They asked Jesus for places of honor and power in the Kingdom.

But today in contrast, Mark proposes the dynamic of a complete and radical discipleship as the ideal for those who listen carefully. In this miracle, Mark offers us numerous details informing the condition of Bartimaeus and his attitude towards Jesus: first, the strength and insistence of his request, second the disregard for his few belongings facing the call, and third, the faith and simplicity in his dialogue with the Lord. So, as a consequence of his faith, Bartimaeus' situation changes

radically: from being blind and sitting by the road, to regain his sight and follow Jesus on the way.

Of all these details on this gospel, one that catches my attention the most is Bartimaeus's first cry, his first request, the reason has a story behind.

A few years ago, just beginning the diaconate formation, a close friend, Catholic journalist and writer, introduced me to the so-called prayer of the heart, also known as the Jesus prayer.

This prayer of the heart is an ancient tradition developed in the Eastern Church and has roots in the Mount Athos monks' ascetic practices since the 5th century. Traditionally it is practiced using a wool rope called *chotki* (in Russian) or *komboskini* (in greek), which usually has 100 knots or beads, similar to the typical rosary we know. It is a tool to count how many times per day the praying person repeats this short and dense supplication: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner."

By the time I learned about prayer, I remember being very intrigued to practice it, and as I did so, then the intrigue grew more when I pondered how Christ would respond in a dialogue.

And it was in 2018, while listening the same reading as of today's gospel, that I heard Christ's answer echoed in my head "What do you want me to do for you?". Christ responds to our plea, "What do you want me to do for you?" And our heart responds, "Lord, I want to see."

This is a short and profound dialogue with the Lord. Many would think "But I am not blind, I see, I already have faith." If so, the invitation is to remember James and John from the previous Sunday gospel. Despite being close to Jesus, they still somehow were blind inside. They were disciples who still didn't see the magnitude of the salvation enterprise. Their ambition kept them blind. As well, let's remember the rich man who was looking for heaven: despite seeing physically, he was still internally blind and didn't see the magnitude of the salvation enterprise. His wealth attachment kept him blind.

On the other hand, let's visualize Bartimaeus, poor and blind, upon hearing from Jesus' disciples that the Master calls him, he leaves EVERYTHING. His robes were probably all the possessions he had. Bartimaeus drops everything and jumps quickly towards Jesus, without seeing him yet, and asks not money but to see. Bartimaeus receives not

only sight but also salvation. Jesus took off a veil from him, and when seeing and hearing the Lord, Bartimaeus's response was to follow Jesus. Bartimaeus becomes a disciple of Christ and followed him on his way to Jerusalem, to his passion.

When sharing testimonies of encounters with Christ, some people talk about parallel phenomena. At a particular moment, typically during prayer and meditation in silence, it occurs as if a veil disappears from our face. Literally, we see all surrounding reality with renewed colors, as if a veneer of smoke vanished and get an inner tangible certainty of God's presence right there at that moment. And it is common to react with renewed intentions to follow him in the mission. However, even in those cases, still the challenge could remain: why should we repeat the request to Jesus: "Lord, I want to see"? Why should we ask to see again and again? We already follow Him; what else do we need to see?

In those cases, again, let's remember James and John, who, although being followers of Jesus they didn't do it fully. And let's remember Bartimaeus' faith example is not only manifested in his petition but also encompasses his works: he leaves the robe, leaps to approach Jesus, and

follows him on his way to Jerusalem. Saint Josemaría Escrivá reminds us in his book work entitled *Friends of God*: "*You have understood what Our Lord was asking from you, and you have decided to accompany him on his way. You are trying to walk in his footsteps, to clothe yourself in Christ's clothing, to be Christ himself: well, your faith, your faith in the light Our Lord is giving you, must be both operative and full of sacrifice. Don't fool yourself. Don't think you are going to find new ways. The faith he demands of us is that we must keep in step with him, working generously and at the same time uprooting and getting rid of everything that gets in the way.*"<sup>1</sup>

May the Lord give us new eyes and light in our understanding to see and know him closer, and a new eyes and light in our hearts to see and help His people in their needs.

May we receive clarity in our minds to understand what we believe better, to form a finer conscience, or to understand the situation we live in

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<sup>1</sup> Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. Friends of God #198. [Opus Dei - writings of the founder \(escrivaworks.org\)](http://opusdei.org)

from God's perspective. With faith that we will get it when sincerely seeking to understand by asking and putting all the means at our reach.

And may we receive light in the interior of our hearts to see Christ in our family, community, neighbors, colleagues, and especially our adversaries. With faith that we will get it when insistently pleading to maintain our heart in continuous and radical conversion.

My Master, I want to see.